

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

MR. GIDDINGS IN REPLY TO MR. SMITH.

We have received by mail from the Hon. JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS, of Ohio, a copy of a long letter, which has already appeared in some of the Ohio papers, on the subject of the Address of the Hon. TRUMAN SMITH to the Public, published in this paper some weeks ago. To so much of the address of the latter as arraigned Mr. GIDDINGS' conduct in the House as the Representative of his constituents we very willingly publish the reply of that gentleman, as subjoined. As for the residue of his letter, we do not perceive any advantage that can accrue to Mr. GIDDINGS or to the Public, by allowing to be repeated in our columns, now that the election and its excitements are over, the arguments for or against the several candidates for the Presidency, or the criminations and recriminations of their respective supporters. Let by-gones be by-gones.

Extract from Mr. Giddings's reply to Mr. Smith.

"You assail me in a manner quite unusual among gentlemen occupying the stations which we fill. You say that you have caused the Journal of the House of Representatives to be searched in order to determine the number of times during the late session which I failed to answer to my name on the call of the yeas and nays. This, I believe, is the first time that ever a member of Congress acknowledged himself to have entered upon such a work. For the dignity of the body to which we belong I hope it may be the last. You little know the character of the people to whom these imputations are addressed. Can you imagine yourself to have been constituted my overseer? Has it come to this, that you consider yourself clothed with supervisory powers over the Representative of seventy thousand of the sovereign people of our gallant State? Have they, sir, requested you to sit in judgment on the habits of their Congressional agent? Had you referred to my official acts, to my votes, or to my political opinions, I should have felt no disposition to reply. My opinions and public acts have not altogether escaped public scrutiny, and they are the proper subjects of examination. But to them you take no exception, while you attempt to charge me with inattention to my public duties. Permit me to say, sir, that there are members of that body whom my constituents would be willing to excuse if they never appeared in their seats on any occasion.

"I think you cannot be ignorant that I have long regarded the practice, so common in the House of Representatives, of frequently calling the yeas and nays as an unnecessary waste of time, and disrespectful to that body. When they are called on adjournments and on the 'calls of the House,' and for suspending the rules, I usually pay no attention to them, but occupy my time in other business. We are told that in the early days of the republic they were seldom called more than six or eight times in a session. You say they were called three hundred and thirty-eight times during the late session. Each call occupies about twenty minutes. One hundred and twelve hours were thus occupied. Our daily sittings would average less than four hours, and, including Sabbaths, more than one month's time was wasted in this useless ceremony. But, supposing twenty of those calls were really proper, yet at least one-ninth part of the whole session must have been wasted. And you complain that I did not waste my time with the others. To discourage this practice, I have refused to answer to my name in all cases except such as I deemed of some importance. But these attempts on my part to discourage what I have long regarded an evil you have endeavored to torture into evidence that I was absent from my seat. I was often told that evil-disposed persons would make such an attempt to misrepresent me to my constituents. I uniformly answered that I represented a constituency too intelligent to be affected by acts of such a character.

"You say that you are always on hand (except for special reasons) prepared to give your vote. It is not my business to call you to account on that subject. But it always looks suspicious to see a man making himself the trumpet of his own merits. I have not the Journal of the House of Representatives before me, nor can I get it short of Washington, but I will hazard the opinion that you were absent during the late session a far greater number of days than I was. You were frequently gone, as was said, to raise funds to promote the election of General Taylor. And you were also in attendance at the Philadelphia Convention. But in this attempt to stigmatize me, and to hold myself up as a pattern of official industry, you have provoked scrutiny. You were not only absent yourself on political errands, but you were instrumental in getting others to leave Congress for the same purpose. If you, through the National Intelligencer, will deny that you, as Chairman of the Whig Executive Committee, paid the expenses of other members of Congress who were absent from their seats for political purposes to the amount of five times the number of days that I was, I will endeavor to show your error by making out an account current for you, showing how many days' expenses you paid to each member who stumped it for General Taylor during the session. Yet you seem to regard my absence at Buffalo and Massachusetts as a dereliction of duty. It is true that I went to Massachusetts, and was absent seven or eight days. It is also true that in 1846 I went to Maine at your request, and was absent twice as long as I was in Massachusetts, promulgating the same doctrines. You then approved of my absence, and paid my expenses. If the doctrine I promulgated were right in 1846, they could not be wrong in 1848. Truth, like its Divine Author, is immutable. If my doctrines were correct in Maine, they could not have been erroneous in Massachusetts. But I think I shall be perfectly safe in saying that the speeches in favor of General Taylor in the House of Representatives, made for the purpose of promoting his election, occupied the whole House more days than I was absent both at Massachusetts and at Buffalo. This would show a loss to the nation of two hundred and twenty-eight times greater than that occasioned by my absence. Again, nearly one-half of the Whig members of Congress attended the Convention at Philadelphia which nominated General Taylor. They were absent about the same length of time that I was at Buffalo; and nearly the same proportion of the Democratic members were in attendance at the Baltimore Convention which nominated General Cass. This will show an additional loss of nearly one hundred times greater than that occasioned by my absence. For those members you have no word of reproach. You were one of them. I went to Massachusetts and to Buffalo at the request and by advice of many worthy and patriotic friends. I went in strict accordance with the long-established usage prevailing both in the Senate and in the House. I did so believing that I could do more for my country and for mankind than I could to remain at Washington. A great number of my constituents had desired me to meet them at Buffalo, to assist in the formation of a political party which should direct its energies to oppose the practices and crimes to which I have referred, and to which I will hereafter call your attention. I may have erred in complying with their request; if so, you are not the man to reprove me."

INTERESTING CASE.—In Cumberland county (Pa.) last week was tried the case of Catherine Oliver and others, of the State of Maryland, against Daniel Kaufman, of Cumberland county, for aiding the escape and harboring thirteen slaves, claimed as the property of the plaintiffs. A great number of witnesses were produced by the plaintiffs' counsel, who proved that the slaves were brought on the evening of the 24th of October, 1847, to the barn of Kaufman, and, after remaining there part of the night, were taken in his wagon across the Susquehanna river. Several witnesses were called, who were immediate neighbors of Kaufman, and positively refused to answer any questions or inquiries propounded by the court or counsel. Being apparently determined to keep silent, they were given into the custody of the sheriff and conveyed to jail. But, after remaining there a short time, they concluded it was better to come forward and give evidence, and accordingly did so in a very humble manner. The defendant's counsel took the ground that a case of this kind did not come under the jurisdiction of this court. Able and lengthy speeches were made by the counsel on both sides, and the judge's charge, though brief, was to the point. The jury retired, and, after being out some eighteen hours, returned a verdict of \$2,000 damages for the plaintiffs. [Baltimore Patriot.]

The Greenbank Point Lighthouse, at the entrance of Annapolis harbor, a fine building, with forty-seven feet elevation for the light, has been finished, and is now ready for use.

THE NORTH AND SOUTH STANDING TOGETHER.

FROM THE SAVANNAH REPUBLICAN.

THE NORTHERN VOTE.—ZACHARY TAYLOR is President elect of the United States. He was nominated and has been run on broad national grounds, having for his platform the constitution, his object the greatest good of the greatest number of the American people, and his constituency the moderate and conservative men of the country. He is indebted to no particular section or locality for his success, having been supported with the same zeal and unanimity in the North, the East, the South, and the West. Nor has he received the entire vote of either section in the above-named divisions. In the South, for example, he gets Maryland and loses Virginia; North Carolina and loses South Carolina; Georgia and loses Alabama; Florida and loses Mississippi; Louisiana and loses Texas; Tennessee and loses Arkansas; Kentucky and loses Missouri. The same is true at the East and the North. Reckoning Delaware with the free States, he gets eight out of the sixteen Northern and Eastern States. It appears, therefore, that Gen. TAYLOR has been supported by all sections of the country. Indebted to no particular local influence for his success, but deriving efficient support from all parts of the Union, and obtaining a majority of the electoral votes both North and South of Mason and Dixon's line, he is as emphatically the President of the Nation as he was the candidate of the People. He received sixty-six electoral votes in the South, and ninety-seven in the Northern States, being a majority in both divisions.

But the object of this article was to express our approbation of the course which the North has pursued in this election. Our friends in that section have conducted themselves nobly, and we congratulate the whole country, and especially the friends of union and harmony, upon the magnanimity with which they have acted. Being largely in the majority in the Philadelphia Convention, they had it in their power to nominate whomsoever they pleased; yet they not only submitted to the nomination of a Southern man and a large slaveholder, but partly assisted in it. And when the nomination had been made, they entered upon the canvass with a cheerfulness and determination worthy of all commendation, and have crowned their patriotic labors by giving the old planter of Louisiana ninety-seven electoral votes. In all this we see an evidence of attachment to the Union, a desire to restore peace and harmony in the councils of the nation, and a devotion to the country, the whole country, and nothing but the country, which cannot but be productive of the most beneficial results. The Union must be preserved! And the North, in her generous support of Gen. TAYLOR, and the South, in her equally zealous support of Mr. FILLMORE, have each given a solemn pledge to the nation and to the world that IT SHALL BE DONE!

We congratulate the country, therefore, and the friends of rational liberty and republicanism every where, upon these auspicious indications. We have much to make us rejoice. From a small and feeble colony, we have rapidly grown into gigantic manhood; and now that we have reached that point in civilization and advancement when we are prepared to enjoy fully the blessings of a free constitution and equal laws, shall we dash our bright prospects to the earth? We answer emphatically, No! We say, "Union now and forever!" for under the Union we are what we are. *Esto perpetua!*

WHIG CELEBRATION AT MOBILE.

The Whigs of Mobile (Ala.) had a magnificent celebration on the night of the 20th instant, in honor of the election of TAYLOR and FILLMORE. It is thus described in the "Register," a Democratic paper:—"The Whig Jubilee came off in fine style on Monday night. All that burning tar barrels, brilliant illuminations, soaring rockets, Chinese crackers, and Bengala lights could contribute to the splendor of the occasion, was put in requisition. At an early hour the principal streets were filled with a dense and turbid smoke, and the air was so clear and pure as to be unlike that of the Iron City, Pittsburgh. Through this uncomfortable 'fog' we made our way, determined to see as much of 'the show' as was 'visible to the naked eye.' The procession was very large, including, besides the Rough and Ready Club, a large number of persons on horseback, several carriages, a great many cars and wagons, and an innumerable company of foot soldiers. Many of the soldiers were mounted in costume, with the emblems and implements of their occupation. The butchers had a car decorated like a stall, with many superior specimens of meat, which no doubt the next morning found ready sale in market. A blacksmith's shop, with a glowing furnace and its occupants at work hammering the heated iron, indicated the place in the procession of the Knights of the Anvil. The display of the East and Franklin had a printing press busily engaged in striking off an ode for the occasion, which was distributed through the crowd. But the most picturesque and beautiful object presented was a miniature steamer, brilliantly painted and decorated, with its wheels in constant motion, turned out by a 'real engine,' but by an Ethiopian arm inside. Many of the other crafts and 'callings' of the city were represented, but we cannot undertake to describe them all. In the way of illuminated transparencies, there was quite an extensive array. A large number of houses in the city were brilliantly illuminated. The Court-house was a blaze of candles, and the portico in front was covered by a large transparent painting representing General Taylor and Old Whitley on their way to the White House. The procession, 'circumventing' the town, passing through all the principal streets. Every thing went off in a peaceful and orderly manner. Shouts for 'Old Zack' rent the air, the steeple and Mr. A. M. Ma. made the night musical with Rough and Ready melodies; and the 'deep-mouthed cannon' filled the welkin with its reverberations."

OCEAN STEAMSHIPS.

THE HERMAN STEAMSHIP.—The accident to the engine of this steamer will detain her at Southampton until the middle of December. The damage to her machinery occurred on the 29th of October, when the cross tail of the larboard engine, which connects the side levers, and to which the connecting-rod working the crank is attached, gave way. The shock acting upon the side levers, cracked them, and the larboard engine became unusable. The remainder of the voyage, 1,200 miles, was performed with one engine, aided by the sails, in about six and a half days, and the Hermann arrived off Cowes about half-past eight o'clock P. M. on the 5th instant, having made the run in about sixteen days. It has been found necessary to have new side levers. The voyage to Bremen has been abandoned, and the Hermann's cargo was to be forwarded by the steamer of the Savannah line. The German mails were delivered to the postmaster of Southampton for transmission to London, from whence they were sent forward by the Hamburg mail steamer. The passengers for Bremen had their passage paid from Southampton via London to Bremen by the English steamer.

MOVEMENT OF STEAMSHIPS.—Three first-class steamers arrived at the port of New York on Saturday, within twelve hours of each other—the *Cherokee*, of the Savannah line, the *Cambria*, of the Liverpool line; and the *United States*, of the Havre line, from New Orleans. The *Southerner*, of the Charleston line, sailed in the afternoon of the same day. In the course of another year we shall have such an abundance of sea-going steamers that their arrival and departure will cause no more remark than the sailing of our fleet of packets or the regular steamers for Boston and Albany. [New York Express.]

FROM ST. JOHN'S, (N. B.).—The St. John's Courier of the 19th contains a notice from the sheriff's office that the whole of the city property, lands, islands, jail, orphan asylum, market-house, Mayor's office, engine-house, and every thing else owned by the city, has been sold on Saturday next, to satisfy an execution issued out of the Supreme Court by certain creditors, to whom all this property had been mortgaged for about \$500,000. About five hundred dollars were raised by voluntary contribution by the Whigs of Rochester, and expended in purchasing and cooking four hundred chickens, five hundred and fifty mince pies, five hundred and fifty large loaves of bread, forty or fifty barrels of apples, one hundred and fifty turkeys, geese, and chickens, besides a necessary supply of biscuits, cakes, &c. They were distributed to about five hundred and fifty families at their houses on Thanksgiving Day. The Ladies' Charitable Society, which has been in existence over thirty years, have divided the city into about forty districts, and have appointed a visitor in every district to inquire into and relieve the necessities of the sick and destitute. These ladies, with characteristic benevolence, volunteered to superintend the distribution of the dinner to the families in person. This was nobly done by Whig contributors and their assistants, who acted themselves as the distributors of their charities as if there had been no political distinctions. [New York Express.]

NAVAL INTELLIGENCE.

FROM THE NORFOLK HERALD.

The following is a statement which we have corrected up to the present time of the United States vessels belonging to the different squadrons. The Home squadron extends the whole length of the coast of the United States; the Pacific squadron from Cape Horn to the mouth of the Columbia river; the Mediterranean squadron throughout the Mediterranean sea; the Brazil squadron along the east coast of South America; the African squadron along the west coast of Africa and the adjacent islands; and the East India squadron extends along the eastern coast of Asia and Africa.

The Home Squadron consists of the frigate *Raritan*, now the flag-ship; sloop of war *Albany*, Germantown, and *Saratoga*; war steamers *Mississippi*, *Iris*, and *Waterwitch*.

The Pacific Squadron consists of the ship-of-the-line *Ohio*, the flag-ship; ship-of-the-line *razed Independence*, frigate *Congress*, sloop-of-war *St. Mary's*, *Warren*, *Dale*, and *Preble*, and the store-ships *Lexington*, *Southampton*, and *Frederia*. The sloop *Warren*, we learn, has been condemned as unseaworthy, and is employed as a store-ship in Monterey bay.

The Mediterranean Squadron consists of the frigate *United States*, the flag-ship; the war steamer *Princeton*, *schr. Taney*, and store-ship *Supply*.

The Brazil Squadron consists of the frigate *Brandywine*, the flag-ship; sloop of war *St. Louis*, war steamer *Allegheny*, *big Perry*, and store-ship *Relief*.

The African Squadron consists of the frigate *Jamestown*, the flag-ship; sloop-of-war *Decatur*, *Portsmouth*, and *Yorktown*; brigs *Boxer*, *Porpoise*, and *Bainbridge*, and store-ship *Erie*.

The East India Squadron consists of the sloop-of-war *Plymouth*, the flag-ship, and brig *Dolphin*.

In the *Baltic* and *North Sea* frigate *St. Lawrence*. It is expected that the United States frigate *Savannah* will go out as flag-ship for the East India squadron.

At the Navy Yard near Norfolk the following works are in progress: The building of the first-class steamer *Poconantas*, the hull of which is already far advanced towards completion, and, when finished, will present one of the most admirable specimens of naval architecture ever beheld; the lengthening and thorough repairing of the sloop-of-war *Van Allen*; the complete overhauling and repairing of the steamer *Mississippi*, and the fitting out of the frigate *Raritan* as the flag-ship of the home squadron, (Com. J. Wilkinson.) This latter vessel is ready for duty with the exception of a poop-deck, which is rapidly progressing for the accommodation of the commodore.

The New York Sun says, there are about four hundred and fifty men at work in the navy yard at Brooklyn, and considerable activity prevails in every department.

The United States frigate *Savannah* is now ready for sea, but the officers and crew are not yet appointed. It is reported that Commander Buchanan, an able officer, will be selected for her; but this is unlikely, as she is entitled to a full captain.

The United States frigate *Cumberland* has been hauled into the dock, and is now being dismantled. The store-ship *Electra* is to be sold at auction on the 5th of December. The store-ship *Frederia* is taking in her cargo with all possible alacrity, and is expected to sail during next week for California.

All the vessels of the coast survey, under Lieutenants Bache, Porter, and Patterson, have been laid up for the winter at Gum block, and the sloop-of-war *Vincennes* has been hauled up on the launching slip for thorough repairs.

The workmen on the dry-dock have taken advantage of the late fine weather and are pushing it rapidly forward. The United States war steamer *San Jacinto* is now only waiting for her machinery. Materials are being prepared for creating a number of new workshops and storehouses. It is reported that Com. Chas. Morris is to take charge of the Boston navy yard, and relieve Com. Foxhall A. Parker.

METEOROLOGICAL.

At the last session of Congress an appropriation of two thousand dollars was made for meteorological observations, to be made under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy. By the following Circular it will be seen what arrangements have been made with regard to the subject:

WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 1, 1848.

The Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, at their last meeting, resolved to establish an extended system of meteorological observations, particularly with reference to American shores, embracing as far as possible the surface of this continent. In order that the meteorological observations ordered by Congress at their last session may not interfere with this enterprise, but co-operate with it, the Secretary of the Navy has directed Professor Esch to join his labors to those of the Secretary of the Institution.

As a preliminary step, it is important to ascertain the number and locality of the persons who will assist in this enterprise, and what available instruments are now in the country. For this purpose those who are disposed to join in these observations are respectfully requested to signify their willingness to do so by a line addressed to the Navy Department, with the word "Meteorology" written on the envelope.

Though it would be of great importance that each observer should be provided with a perfect set of compared instruments, yet it is believed that much valuable information relative to the velocity, the duration, and the extent of storms may be obtained even without instruments, from a mere record of the face of the sky, the direction and force of the wind, and the beginning and ending of rain and snow, provided the observations are of sufficient extent and duration. Blank forms, free of expense, will be sent to those who are disposed to join in the observations; and, as soon as the amount of funds for this purpose is sufficient, full sets of instruments will be furnished to careful observers in important localities.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH HENRY,

Secretary Smithsonian Institution.

JAMES P. ESPY,

Meteorologist under the direction of the Sec'y of Navy.

In connexion with the above Circular, it may be mentioned that six sets of meteorological instruments, including barometers, thermometers, &c., were sent from the Smithsonian Institution yesterday, to be forwarded to the coast of Oregon and California, for the purpose of establishing a series of meteorological observations on the western side of the Rocky mountains. It is believed that, from observations in this locality, in connexion with those to be made in the eastern and middle part of the United States, interesting meteorological facts can be obtained relative to atmospheric disturbances over the continent of North America.

GEORGE BELTZHOVER, extensively known among the great travelling community, for many years, as the proprietor of the Fountain Inn, in the city of Baltimore, died at his residence near that city, on Saturday, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

By New Orleans, on the 17th, was tried a suit instituted by R. C. Matthews against Col. H. Wilson. Mr. M. published in *Vera Cruz*, whilst our army was in possession of that city, and called it a paper called the *Genius of Liberty*. Certain articles were published which caused Col. W. to arrest Mr. M. and send him out of the country, on the ground that the articles were libellous and tended to excite disaffection, &c. Judge Buchanan, of New Orleans, after hearing the case, decided in favor of Col. Wilson, thus approving his course, and adjudged Mr. M. to pay the costs. Mr. M. had lost his damages at \$10,000.

NAVY YARD AT NEW ORLEANS.—The New Orleans "Crescent" says that the United States Government has purchased a lot of ground on the other side of the river, about half a mile below the foundry at Algiers, for a navy yard. The lot has four hundred feet front on the river, contains ten superficial acres, and cost \$15,000.

The St. Louis Republican of the 16th instant says that Messrs. Sigersons are packing at their establishment in that city twenty-five hundred tierces of pork for the French navy, which is to be delivered immediately. This is the first contract of the kind in that section of the country. There are also very large quantities putting up there for the English market. At the packing establishment of Messrs. Clarkson & May, alone, let ten twenty-five thousand hogs will be cut at their blocks.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

From Cist's Cincinnati Advertiser and Niles's Register we gather some interesting statistics of the number of electoral votes cast for each President. Originally two persons were voted for—the highest in vote being thereby made President, and the next highest Vice President. But the difficulty which sprang from the equal vote of Jefferson and Burr effected a change in the Constitution.

In 1789. Ten States were entitled to 73 votes. George Washington received 79, which were all the votes cast, as some of the States were not represented in full. John Adams was chosen Vice President.

In 1792. Fifteen States were entitled to 135 votes, of which George Washington received 132, all the votes cast. John Adams again Vice President.

In 1796. Sixteen States were entitled to 138 votes, of which John Adams received 71, and Thomas Jefferson was chosen Vice President.

In 1800. Sixteen States were entitled to 188 votes, of which Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr received each 73. No choice by the people. The House of Representatives, after balloting six days, on the thirty-sixth ballot elected Thomas Jefferson President and Aaron Burr Vice President.

In 1804. Seventeen States were entitled to 176 votes, of which Thomas Jefferson received 162. George Clinton Vice President.

In 1808. Seventeen States and 176 votes. James Madison received 122 votes, and was chosen President; George Clinton Vice President. George Clinton had received electoral votes at every election since the organization of the Government.

In 1812. Eighteen States and 218 votes. James Madison received 128 as President, and Elbridge Gerry 131 as Vice President.

In 1816. Nineteen States and 221 votes, of which James Monroe received 183. D. D. Tompkins Vice President.

In 1820. Twenty-four States and 293 votes. James Monroe received 231. D. D. Tompkins Vice President.

From 1804 to 1820 the successful candidates had been nominated by a caucus of the Democratic party in Congress. Since that time (1820) all parties have nominated in National Conventions.

In 1824. Twenty-four States and 261 votes. Andrew Jackson received 99 for President, and John Q. Adams 84 as the Whig candidate. John C. Calhoun, Vice President, had 138 votes.

In 1828. Same States and 261 votes. Jackson received 178, a majority over Adams of 95 electoral votes. Calhoun Vice President.

In 1832. Twenty-five States and 298 votes. Jackson received 219, a majority of 170 over Clay. Martin Van Buren Vice President.

In 1836. Twenty-six States and 294 votes. M. Van Buren received 170, a majority of 97 over Wm. H. Harrison. R. M. Johnson Vice President.

In 1840. Twenty-six States and 294 votes, of which Gen. Harrison received 234, a majority of 174 over Van Buren. John Tyler Vice President.

In 1844. Twenty-six States and 275 votes, of which Jas. K. Polk received 170, a majority over Mr. Clay of 64. G. M. Dallas Vice President.

INCREASE OF VOTES.

The popular vote since 1828 for President has been as follows:

Years.	Votes.
1828.....	1,162,418
1832.....	1,290,498
1836.....	1,501,298
1840.....	2,402,658
1844.....	2,792,549

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY.

An article in the last number of the London Quarterly Review contains an interesting recapitulation of recent discoveries bearing upon the science of physical geography, together with many curious and wonderful facts deduced from these discoveries, relative to the history of the earth, and to the various forms of organic existence of which at different periods it has been the habitation. We speak of these discoveries as recent; for the most important of them, on which is founded the science of fossil remains, dates no further back than the time of Guvier, who declared the silence of these speechless oracles to be eloquent of truth, revealing events far antecedent to the date of human existence—a secret never fathomed by the wisest men of the East, and which the scope of Grecian and Roman learning was not broad enough to comprehend. In their times, as in ours, the tablets of stone on which are written the history of the living forms that successively tenanted the earth before "the sixth day" of the Creation, were dug from the earth and quarried from the mine and exposed by the torch, and finally, the language of the fossil remains of organic existence diffused throughout the whole of this vast creation. To explore so wide a field the labors of many minds and of many hands are requisite; and numerous societies have been organized with the sole object of prosecuting separate branches of natural knowledge which to the mass of mankind appear utterly insignificant; and individuals devote their lives to researches whose objects seem so trivial as to almost to provoke derision. But to the exact knowledge obtained by such minute and laborious investigations the science of physical geography owes its completeness, and, however much we may smile at the "zeal of M. Robineau in gathering up one thousand species of the genus *musca* in the single department of the Yonne," the indefatigable spider-collector will be mentioned with honor in the annals of science as the "illustrious arachnologist."

One of the most interesting discoveries of modern research, is the fact demonstrated by Lyell, Darwin, and others, of the slow and continuous upheaving or depression of large tracts of land in different parts of the world, resulting from the progress of subterranean changes. Between the latitude of the North pole and that of the equator, the land gradually rises at the Baltic to the Cattegat, the land is gradually rising at the average rate of about four feet in a century; while below that southern limit there is a slow subsidence and gradual approximation of the surface of the land towards the level of the adjacent seas. From this and similar phenomena occurring elsewhere, in South America, and the coral formations of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, these geologists incline to ascribe to such gradual changes those great aspects of the earth's surface which others attribute to the earthquake, the torrent, and the volcano. Mr. Lyell refers the alterations of climate in particular regions, at successive periods, to these changes, and shows how the elevation of the land above the sea between tropics raises the mean temperature, and in higher latitudes depresses it, and hence accounts for those changes in the nature and conditions of organic life, which are demonstrated by the fossil remains now laid open to our observation to have occurred after the lapse of long intervals in the same district of country. Before the formation of the tertiary strata of the earth's surface, our northern hemisphere enjoyed a tropical climate, and possessed the corresponding forms of animal and vegetable life. But a general upheaving of the land gradually produced the aspect which now it wears, and with a change of climate brought about a change in the forms of organic life. These discoveries beautifully illustrate the intimate connexion of the physical sciences.

We have only space left to notice the curious questions which the recent discoveries bearing on the science of Physical Geography have suggested to philosophical inquiry. They cannot be more intelligently expressed than in the language of the Reviewer: viz. "whether there be any such absolute nature of species as to preclude the possibility of an unbroken succession, by generation of organic life, from its earliest appearance on the earth to the present moment, admitting unlimited time, and altered conditions of the surface, as the elevation and depression of land, or, dissolving this doctrine, whether there be any true ascending scale of perfection in successive creations, and evidence of higher and more consummate organization of living beings, as we rise upwards in the fossiliferous strata, and bring the series to the types and forms which now exist around us." An affirmative answer impels the mind to the anticipation of future changes and adaptations in the form and conditions of animal life, in infinite progression. [Journal of Commerce.]

TO THE EDITORS.

SOUTH GIBSON, GIBSON CO. (TEN.) NOV. 9, 1848.

GENTLEMEN: Believing that you take some interest in the affairs of the Government of this Union and feel interested in the welfare of your fellow-citizens, I venture to address you upon a subject in which I have hundreds of others as much concerned: a subject on which I have hitherto failed to receive satisfactory information, after application to every source from which I could expect to derive it. That subject is the "Bounty Land" act of Congress of February 11, 1847.

I have read the act as published in the country journals, and have failed to understand its provisions plainly. The copies I have seen must have been loosely made up, or the act itself must have been very carelessly written. The obscurity (to me) is in the concluding words of that part (I have no copy before me) relative to the rule of heirship, in which it is stated that the bounty shall fall, "first, to the wife; second, the children; third, the father; fourth, the mother, &c." of any deceased volunteer. The "et cetera" appeared to me to include collateral heirs; and I find this was the opinion of many other persons. I afterwards saw a copy of Regulations and Instructions issued from the Pension Department, in which it is expressly declared "no brother or sister can claim the bounty under the act."

But what was my surprise on seeing in a late number of the *Washington Union* (I forget the date) a lengthy course of instructions to persons interested in the bounty, in which (I do not mistake, I think) it is plainly asserted brothers and sisters of deceased soldiers can and may receive the bounty land or scrip.

I have inquired of lawyers and other knowing ones, and have been unable to learn the truth. Men's opinions are widely variant. I would have written to the Commissioner of Pensions, but could not expect an early reply.

My object in addressing you is simply that all who are interested like myself, through the medium of the press, have a plain and positive explanation of the law on this particular point. Surely some one must know whether Congress intended to include collateral heirs or not. If so, it should be widely known; if not, the knowledge of the fact will save much trouble. But it is surely doing great injustice to exclude such, as myself and many other brothers of deceased volunteers have sustained immense losses by the death of our volunteer brothers. I am very poor, and have lost by my brother's death nearly a thousand dollars; and I think the Government ought, in sheer justice, to make some provision, or at least extend that already made to those who suffer most.

The foregoing letter having appeared in the *Daily National Intelligencer* of Tuesday last the following reply to it was received from the Commissioner of Pensions:

PENSION OFFICE, NOVEMBER 28, 1848.

GENTLEMEN: In your paper of this morning I notice a communication from one of your correspondents in Gibson, Tennessee, which requires a reply. The writer says: "I would have written to the Commissioner of Pensions, but 'could not expect an early reply.' It is proper that the public should know that letters are promptly answered at this office. Our answers to correspondents are brief, but explicit; and all who desire information from us may rest assured that they need not wait an unreasonable time for information to enable them to prepare papers in support of claims to land or pensions. In the examination of claims some delay is unavoidable, for reasons which have already been made known through the medium of the press."

The 9th section of the act of the 11th February, 1847, allowing bounty land or scrip, at the option of the claimant, does not allow land to collateral relatives of the deceased soldier, as will be discovered by an examination of the law. But the first section of the act of May 27, 1848, explanatory of the act of February 11, 1847, extends the provisions of the act of 1847 to brothers and sisters, in case the soldier left neither widow, child, father, nor mother.

The regulations to which your correspondent alludes, which declare that no brother or sister can claim bounty land under the act, were published before the amendatory act of May, 1848, passed.

The statement in the *Washington Union* to which the writer refers was correct in all respects as to heirship. I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. L. EDWARDS.

MONTE, GILES & SEATON.

NOTE, BY THE EDITORS.

Had we supposed that our correspondent, in stating his reason for addressing his request to us, intended to intimate any thing more than that the excessive occupation of the Commissioner of Pensions discouraged the expectation of his being able to give early replies to individual letters asking explanations of statutory enactments, we should have at least entered a caveat in his favor. There is no officer in the Government, we are persuaded, who more assiduously and faithfully devotes himself to the discharge of his proper duties than the Commissioner of Pensions.